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ABSTRACT

This language arts minicourse guide for Lampeter-Strasburg (Pennsylvania) High School contains a topical outline of a drama course. The guide includes a list of eleven course objectives; an outline of the types of drama to be studied in the course; a description of the course content and concepts to be studied, including staging, acting, and audience in Greek, Roman, Medieval, Restoration, and Modern drama; the presentation of twelve student activities which can be completed both inside and outside the class; and suggestions for instructional materials, including records, filmstrips, cassettes, transparencies, and movies. The guide concludes with a nine-item bibliography and a suggested textbook for use in teaching the drama course. (RB)

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Language Arts Mini-Course

D R A M A

Lampeter-Strasburg High School
Lampeter, Pennsylvania

1973

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DRAMA

OBJECTIVES

The student should be able:

1. To explain the five functions of drama in life: escape, entertainment, social criticism, exploration of ideas, and instructional.
2. To list in chronological order six steps in the development of drama.
3. To list characteristics of the stage, actors, audience, and playwrights during each step in the development of drama.
4. To list two examples of repression and encouragement of the theatre in the development of drama.
5. To define and identify protagonist, antagonist, and minor character.
6. To define exposition, inciting force, rising action, climax, and denouement.
7. To identify and analyze dramatic conflicts.
8. To define four kinds of drama: farce, comedy, melodrama, and tragedy.
9. To define and carry out stage directions.
10. To read and view stage and television plays with a deeper appreciation for the presentation of drama.
11. To criticize in writing a stage or television play using the vocabulary of drama.

OUTLINE

I. DEFINITION OF DRAMA

II HISTORY OF DRAMA

- A. Greek
- B. Roman
- C. Medieval
- D. Elizabethan
- E. Restoration
- F. Modern

III. ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

A. Character

1. Heroes
2. Protagonist
3. Antagonist
4. Minor characters

B. Plot

1. Definition
2. Parts of plot

a. Exposition
b. Inciting force
c. Rising action
d. Climax
e. Denouement

C. Theme

D. Dialogue

E. Music

F. Spectacle

1. Visual actions of characters
2. Scenery
3. Costumes
4. Make-up
5. Stage lighting
6. Props

G. Dramatic conflicts

1. Man vs. man
2. Man vs. nature
3. Man vs. society
4. Man vs. ideas
5. Man vs. his God or gods
6. Man vs. himself

IV. KINDS OF DRAMA

A. Farce

B. Comedy

C. Melodrama

D. Tragedy

V. PRESENTATION OF DRAMA

A. Stage directions

1. Movements of actors
2. Tone of speaking voice
3. Setting
4. Lighting
5. Sound effects
6. Speaking to a certain character
7. Handling props

B. Spectacle

1. Scenery
2. Costumes
3. Make-up
4. Lighting
5. Props

C. Production

1. Producer
2. Director
3. Actor

CONTENT

I. DEFINITION OF DRAMA - A LITERARY COMPOSITION PLAYED ON STAGE THROUGH ACTION AND, USUALLY, DIALOGUE: DERIVED FROM THE GREEK VERB "TO DO"

II. HISTORY OF DRAMA

A. Greek

1. Stage

a. Physical plant

(1) Staged on an orchestra - a round, temporary dancing floor stamped out in the market place at Athens
(2) As spectators grew more numerous, performances shifted to nearby foot of the steep hill called the Acropolis

b. Sets - none
c. Costumes

(1) Chorus leader - Mask of Dionysus
(2) Processional dancers - animal skins

d. Props - none
e. Lighting - natural

2. Actors

   a. Chorus leader
   b. Chorus dancers

      (1) Centaurs
      (2) Satyrs

3. Audience - the whole male and free population of the city-state
4. Playwrights

   a. Thespis - transformed religious ritual into drama

      (1) Began acting out narratives linked to the Greek gods
      (2) Chorus leader became a true actor (hypocrites - answerer)

   b. Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.) - introduced speaking parts for two actors
   c. Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) - speaking parts for three actors
   d. Euripides (480-406 B.C.) - introduced eleven speaking parts even though only three actors
   e. Aristophanes (448-380 B.C.) - comic playwright - poked subtle fun at the most respected Athenian citizens (much like modern satire)

B. Roman

1. Stage

   a. Physical plant

      (1) Raised stage came into being
      (2) Erection of tiers on massive rows of arches, curved in huge semicircles for seating

   b. Sets

      (1) Stone walls decorated with marble columns and pierced with arches
      (2) Periaktoi - a three-sided piece of machinery which rotated to reveal a different scene painted upon, each side
      (3) Curtains were introduced

   c. Costumes - use of costumes and masks enabled a small company of actors to perform by doubling of parts
   d. Props - none
   e. Lighting - natural - open air

2. Actors - prior to first century B.C., actors were legally deprived of certain political rights and forced to work as slaves under a theatre manager
3. Audience - citizens, slaves, matrons, courtesans, nurses, and their squalling charges. Drama was just another spectacle to be enjoyed by the masses on numerous public holidays.

4. Playwrights - (Roman plays were usually translations from the Greek)

   a. Plautus (254-184 B.C.) - comic playwright
   b. Terence (185-159 B.C.) - comic playwright
   c. Seneca (4 B.C. - 65 A.D.) - wrote bloodthirsty tragedies more for reading than for acting

C. Medieval

1. Types

   a. Trope - a brief scene which was strictly a part of established liturgy to bring alive key events in the Christian gospels presented only at Christmas and Easter
   b. Mystery play - Cycles of thirty and more plays, one for every major Bible story from the Creation to the Last Judgment - performed over a span of several days at the festivals of Pentecost and Corpus Christi
   c. Miracle play - each related the life story of a saint and the miracles that he or she performed
   d. Morality play - a drama in which all the characters were personified virtues and vices, and they competed for the soul of the central figure, Mankind

2. Stage

   a. Plysical plant

      (1) In churches
      (2) Open air
      (3) Acted on a broad platform backed by mansiones (houses) - (several set around a town square)
      (4) Mansiones were often mounted separately on carts which toured from one group of spectators to another

   b. Sets - there were painted scenes depicting Hell, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem standing side by side
   c. Costumes

      (1) Masks for devils, etc.
      (2) Actors dressed for parts portrayed

   d. Props - none
   e. Lighting - natural - open air

3. Actors

   a. Priests
   b. Secular bodies

      (1) English trade guilds
      (2) French amateur companies
      (3) Italian youth groups

4. Audience - everyone (All good Christians and probably not such good ones came into town to see the stories of the Bible enacted by their friends in the many craft guilds)
5. Playwrights

   a. Church people embellished Bible stories for tropes
   b. Guilds helped to rewrite stories
   c. Local poets added their own embellishments

D. Elizabethan

1. Stage

   a. Physical plant

      (1) Inn-yard
      (2) Stages built in inn-yards
      (3) Buildings constructed
      (4) Globe Theatre

         (a) Spectators swarmed round three sides at least of the stage
         (b) The chief acting area, with access from two upstage doors, was a very large open platform, estimated at over forty feet wide and nearly thirty feet deep
         (c) The rear facade of the platform was a permanent architectural and therefore neutral "set," providing two or three levels and many acting areas

   b. Sets - minimum of
   c. Costumes - elaborate/depended on these for effect not given by sets
   d. Props - minimum of
   e. Lighting - natural

2. Actors

   a. Men and boys (no females)
   b. Burbage Company - sometimes actor - managers hired actors by the season and paid them by the week, while rich patrons (princes and merchants) hired actors on ad hoc basis for special occasions
   c. Acting companies - more professional and commercial
   d. Drama placed a remarkable emphasis on the actor/voice and words/and the meaning created with body gesture and movement

3. Audience

   a. All classes (paid attendance)
   b. Males and females in audience
   c. Groundlings
   d. In close intimacy with the actor

4. Playwrights - relieved of religious responsibilities

   a. William Shakespeare
   b. Ben Jonson
   c. Christopher Marlower

5. Drama in Europe

   a. Italy

      (1) Developed art of perspective - adapted in scenery
      (2) Teatro Olimpico of Vicenza - reconstruction of an ancient Roman theatre built for a literary society
      (3) Rise of opera

   b. Spain

      (1) Corral playhouses
      (2) Platform stage at one end
      (3) Spectators from all levels of society

   c. Two common points of Renaissance drama

      (1) Concentrated less on salvation of man's soul
      (2) Players had to produce more plays

E. Restoration

   1. Stage

      a. Physical plant

         (1) Smaller
         (2) Indoor
         (3) Proscenium arch

      b. Sets

         (1) Scenery painted a picture behind proscenium arch
         (2) Rigidly symmetrical and unreal
         (3) Sets used over again as a decorative background

      c. Costumes - as needed
      d. Props

         (1) Bare aid to acting
         (2) Sometimes had a deeper significance

      e. Lighting - candles

   2. Actors

      a. Stayed in touch with audience
      b. Played before proscenium upon projecting stage
      c. Presence of actresses for the first time on English stage

3. Audience

a. Smaller audience of upper-class
b. Sat in the pit or in the galleries and boxes

4. Playwrights

a. Richard B. Sheridan
b. John Dryden
c. Moliere
d. Oliver Goldsmith
e. Corneille
f. Racine
g. Richard Steele

F. Modern

1. Stage

a. Physical plant

(1) Picture frame stage
(2) Theatre-in-the-round

b. Sets

(1) "Box" setting: the drawingroom, the kitchen, the garden, or the yard
(2) The fourth wall is felt to be behind the audience

c. Costumes - used as needed
d. Props - used as needed
e. Lighting - clever effects

2. Actors

a. Use normal idiom of speech
b. Behavior of a character is detailed like real life
c. Actor's speech, gesture, movement, and grouping depend on his feeling for the part
d. Introspective approach to acting
e. Actor now accepted by most classes of society

3. Audience

a. All classes but prices can be prohibitive
b. Detached position from actor
c. Audience has "peeping-Tom" status

4. Playwrights

a. Germany, Austria, Switzerland

(1) Georg Buechner
(2) Friedrich Hebbel
(3) Bertolt Brecht
(4) Max Frisch

b. Norway and Sweden

(1) Henrik Ibsen
(2) August Strindberg

c. Russia

(1) Anton Chekhov
(2) Maxim Gorky

d. Italy and Spain

(1) Luigi Pirandello
(2) Ugo Betti
(3) Alfonso Sastre

e. France

(1) Jean Anouilh
(2) Jean-Paul Sartre
(3) Jean Genet
(4) Eugene Ionesco
(5) Samuel Beckett

f. England and Ireland

(1) T. S. Eliot
(2) Christopher Fry
(3) Sean O' Casey
(4) George Bernard Shaw
(5) John Millington Synge
(6) William Butler Yeats
(7) Harold Pinter
(8) Robert Bolt

g. United States

(1) Edward Albee
(2) Lorraine Hansberry
(3) Lillian Hellman
(4) William Inge
(5) Allan J. Lerner
(6) Arthur Miller
(7) Eugene O' Neill
(8) Reginald Rose
(9) William Saroyan
(10) Rod Serling
(11) Thornton Wilder
(12) Tennessee Williams

III. ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

A. Character - is the principal material from which a plot is created

1. Heroes

a. Tragic hero - had a flaw in character
b. Modern hero - a victim of external forces

2. Protagonist(s) - the major character in a literary work - the one the dramatic pressure centers upon
3. Antagonist(s) - the person or force that opposes the protagonist of a literary work
4. Minor characters

a. Confidant - the character in whom a major character confides
b. Foil - character who contrasts with, or is the opposite of, the protagonist
c. Stock - a stereotyped figure, easily recognized and accompanied by a group of expected and anticipated characteristics

B. Plot

1. Definition - a casual or motivated sequence of actions which introduce a conflict into the lives of a group of characters, cause them to decide on certain courses of conduct in relation to the change, follow the alternating efforts of the two sides to a conclusion, and give a glimpse of the new state of affairs which arises as a result of the struggle
2. Parts of plot

a. Exposition -

(1) Who the characters are
(2) Where the characters are
(3) When the play takes place
(4) What has gone on before curtain went up

b. Inciting force - the first part of the exposition which is dynamic
c. Rising action (complication) - consists of the actions taken by the protagonist and by the forces against him
d. Climax - is the event that determines how the conflict will end
e. Denouement - presents the outcome, disposes of subplots, and gives a glimpse of a new, stable situation

C. Theme - the topic, or subject, or a literary work; or a succinct formulation expressing the subject

D. Dialogue - the use of language to create thought, character, and incident

E. Music - invovles either musical accompaniment or, more commonly today, the arranged pattern of sound that makes up human speech

F. Spectacle

1. Visual actions of characters
2. Scenery
3. Costumes
4. Make-up
5. Stage lighting
6. Props

G. Dramatic conflicts

1. Man vs. man
2. Man vs. nature
3. Man vs. society
4. Man vs. ideas
5. Man vs. his God or gods
6. Man vs. himself

IV. KINDS OF DRAMA

A. Farce

1. Aims at laughter
2. Slapstick behavior
3. Absurd situations
4. Cross-purposes and misunderstandings

B. Comedy

1. Grows out of farce
2. Plot situations more probable than farce

C. Melodrama

1. Mystery-thriller
2. Full of possible but usually averted disaster for the sympathetic characters

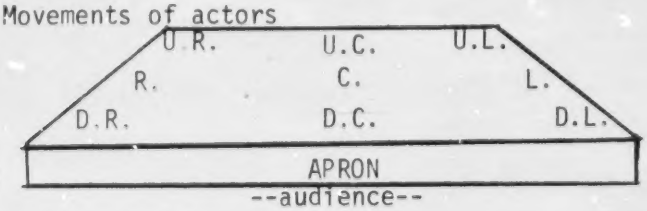
D. Tragedy

1. Serious drama
2. Concludes with catastrophe
3. Downfall or death of the protagonist

V. PRESENTATION OF DRAMA

A. Stage directions - given to directors and actors for

1. Movements of actors



U.R. - upstage right R. - right D.R. - downstage right
U.C. - upstage center C. - center D.C. - downstage center
U.L. - upstage left L. - left D.L. - downstage left

2. Tone and emotion of speaking voice - (e.g.) Gregory: (clenching his teeth in hate)

3. Setting

   a. General - the audience should be made aware of the year, the season, the day, the hour
   b. Specific - playwright gives an explicit description of the room
   c. Dialogue - sometimes setting must be given in lines

4. Lighting - playwright mentions in a general manner some lighting schemes

   a. Typical situations

      (1) Character spotting
      (2) Passing of time
      (3) Creating a scene within a scene
      (4) General effect

   b. Colors suggest emotional tones

      (1) Red, yellow, and orange are warm colors that go with strong and warm feeling, emotions
      (2) Green, blue, and white are cold colors that fit impersonal, serious situations
      (3) Black light - for very special effect

5. Sound effects

   a. Weather
   b. Telephones
   c. Doorbells
   d. Auto accidents
   e. Broken windows

6. Actor speaking to <u>this</u> character rather than <u>that</u> one (e.g., - Marcia: I can't listen to this any longer. (To mother) Do I have to?

7. Handling props

   a. To describe - action:
      "Nervously tearing open the letter"

   b. To extend characterization:
      "Lifting his pizza with his little finger extended"

B. Spectacle

1. Scenery - painted screens, backdrops, hangings, flats, etc., used on stage to represent places and surroundings in a play
2. Costumes - the style of dress typical of a certain country, period, or profession as worn in a play
3. Make-up - the cosmetics, wigs, etc. used by an actor
4. Lighting - the art, practice, or manner of using and arranging lights on a stage
5. Props - any of the movable articles used as part of the setting or in a piece of stage business, except the costumes and backdrops

C. Production

1. Producer - responsible for

   a. Buying of the play
   b. Renting of the theatre
   c. Engagement of actors and staff
   d. Handling of receipts

2. Director - one who supervises the production of a play
3. Actor - person who acts in plays, movies

ACTIVITIES

1. Students will read a minimum of five one act plays.
2. Students will view filmstrips on reading and understanding drama.
3. Students will view movies on the theatre and dramatic action. (I U 13)
4. Students will view transparencies dealing with an introduction of drama.
5. Students will visit the school stage to see a demonstration of lighting techniques.
6. Students will visit the school stage to study stage directions for movements of actors.
7. Students will listen to guest speakers who can lend to any area in the field of drama.
8. Students will see a demonstration of make-up and costume for a character part.
9. Students will work in a committee to present a scene or act from a play.
10. Students may listen to tapes from drama critic Walter Kerr for extra credit.

11. Students may do independent reading of the drama section of the Sunday New York Times to stay abreast of the current theatre.

12. Students will judge at least one live stage or television play.

SOURCE MATERIALS

I. RECORDS:

A. Hedda Gabler (Henrik Ibsen)

B. The Glass Menagerie (Tennessee Williams)

II. FILMSTRIPS:

A. "What Is Drama?" (Guidance Associates) sound

B. "How To read and Understand Drama" (Learning Arts) sound

III. CASSETTES

A. "Walter Kerr" Guide To The Theatre" (Teaching resources)

IV. TRANSPARENCIES:

A. "Drama: An Introduction" (Educational Direction Inc.)

V. MOVIES (I U 13)

A. Walter Kerr on Theatre MP-3-2112

B. What's In a Play - Dramatic Action MP-2-3127

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. A Handbook For The Study of Drama
Lynn Altenbernd and Leslie Lewis

B. A Student's Guide To Literary Terms
James G. Taaffe

C. Drama
Reprint from World Book Encyclopedia

D. Introducing The Drama
John Gassner and Morris Sweetkind

E. The Dramatic Experience
J. L. Styan

F. The Illustrated Libraries of Human Knowledge
ed. Julian Huxley

G. The Modern Theatre
Robert W. Corrigan

H. The Oxford Companion To The Theatre
ed. Phyllis Hartnoll

I. Writing Incredibly Short Plays, Poems and Stories
James H. Norton and Francis Gretton

VII. SUGGESTED TEXT

A. A Handbook For The Study of Drama
Lynn Attenbernd and Leslie Lewis